

Comments on Implementation of Early Voting in CT: SB 1057, SB 1064, HB 5004

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Flexer and Rep. Blumenthal, Vice-Chairs Sen. Slap and Rep. Morin-Bello, Ranking Members Sen. Sampson and Rep. Mastrofrancesco, and Distinguished Members of the GAE Committee,

I am an unaffiliated voter, a retired working mother, and currently an unpaid local elected official and volunteer.

Although retired, I remember how hard it can be for some voters (especially those in working families with children) to get to the polls on election day - a workday for most! Unanticipated events can also occur that can make it even harder: a sick child, unexpectedly long commute, extra hours at work due to the need for extra earnings, the need to cover for an absent colleague, unexpected business travel...the list goes on. It is for many of these reasons, CT voters overwhelmingly approved amending the state Constitution to allow Early Voting in CT.

Now it is up to you and your committee to take into consideration the needs of CT voters and taxpayers, as well as those currently responsible for overseeing in-person elections (including Registrars of Voters and the CT Secretary of the State), and to put forward proposed legislation that will allow for the rapid, funded, successful implementation of Early Voting in CT.

Hopefully, the GAE Committee will combine the best of each of the bills being considered, SB 1057, SB 1064, and HB 5004, and will include the following in the final bill:

- Full funding by the state, at least for initial roll-out in all 169 communities and ideally longer. This should include the necessary funding to train staff, to purchase necessary equipment, and to educate the public on the new Early Voting process and timing.
- At least ten days of Early Voting, including at least one weekend (Sat and Sun), that should include early morning and evening hours.
- Rapid roll-out, with state and local election pilots in 2023, and full roll-out in 2024.
- Legislation text sufficiently flexible to allow for updated technology changes over time.
- Local oversight of in-person Early Voting should remain with Registrars of Voters, who are also responsible for in-person Election Day voting.
- Initially, Early Voting should apply to General Elections and Primaries. There are many different factors that would need to be considered before deciding whether to implement for town referendums and special elections, which vary by Town and should not delay General Election and Primary roll-outs.
- Voting registration timelines will need to change to accommodate Early Voting timelines.

I hope you seriously consider my comments, many of which align with recommendations by the Registrars of Voters Association of Connecticut (ROVAC) and League of Women Voters of CT.

Best regards,
Nancy Hutchinson
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